TYRANNY AND FREE SPEECH

Do you support free speech? How about free speech for climate change skeptics? For homophobes? For racists? For sexists? For white males? For even Donald Trump?

Those who defend free speech, as did the American Founding Fathers, understand it is not about defending speech you agree with, but defending speech you disagree with. Without free speech, there is no liberty.

The State Department diversity officer, John Robinson, has just warned the staff that they may be penalized for engaging in "microaggressions," which include jokes or other comments that someone who hears them may find offensive.

In a recent letter, he referred to a definition of microaggressions as "everyday verbal, nonverbal and environmental slights, snubs or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory or negative messages to target persons."

In other words, whatever you hear may be considered a microaggression if you choose to be offended.

Such vague and infinitely elastic laws and regulations are the bread and butter of all totalitarian regimes.

Lavrentiy Beria (Joseph Stalin's head of the NKVD, a predecessor of the KGB) was quoted as saying to Stalin, "You name the person and I will find the crime."

The "crime" of microaggression has already been used to stifle and prosecute speech by those who have contrary views in several left-leaning universities, and now it is coming to the federal government.

Which do you find more offensive, a person advocating socialism or a person telling jokes about one-eyed people?

Socialism is an ideology that has resulted in governments killing more than 200 million of their own citizens in the last century. It is based on coercion rather than liberty. It demands involuntary servitude. Socialist Bernie Sanders promises "free" stuff to his supporters to be paid for by the involuntary servitude of others -- to which there will be no end.

Having spent considerable time in socialist countries and seen the human wreckage that results, I am offended by the ignorance or venality of those who engage in the microaggression of advocating socialism.

Several decades ago, I lost an eye, and in the years since I have been told hundreds of "one-eyed" jokes, even by people who do not know me. Rather than being offended, I have chosen to enjoy them. Offensive speech is totally subjective, and making it a crime is incompatible with a free society.

The climate change lobbyists have been increasingly aggressive in their attacks on free speech. They seek to silence their critics, who have committed the "sin" of noting their many failed predictions.

George Mason University meteorologist Jagadish Shukla was the lead signatory of the letter sent to the president and attorney general asking them to use RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act) laws to prosecute "corporations and other organizations that have knowingly deceived the American people about the risks of climate change."

Mr. Shukla, it turns out, is so corrupt he paid himself and his wife $1.5 million from government climate grants for part-time work.

Other prominent global warming fear-mongers, who are on the government teat, have also called for "war crimes trials" and even the "execution" of some critics. Even Attorney General Loretta Lynch said last week she has looked at the possibility of pursuing civil actions against so-called "climate change deniers."

The message: Don't look to the Obama administration to protect free speech.

The Guardian, a left-wing British newspaper, published an article last year by a woman author titled, "Why do women lie more than men?" It reported on a new poll that "suggests that women are twice as likely to lie as men." The article goes on to say: "It may be irritating to be told, yet again, that women are more morally slippery than men (just as in Genesis)."

The article goes on to cite several reasons why this may be true -- including differences "between masculine and feminine brains."

All of this may or may not be nonsense, but in cases of women complaining about men engaging in "offensive" speech, it is most often assumed, without evidence, that the woman is telling the truth and the man is lying.

In fact, men are frequently not allowed to know who their accuser is or what she claimed was said.

One of the most basic protections of liberty is the right of the accuser to know the specific charges against him or her and by whom. As a result, many innocent men are not given a fair hearing by the human resource departments in organizations and even sometimes by the courts.

The late well-regarded feminist, Joan Kennedy Taylor, argued in her book "What to Do When You Don't Want to Call the Cops: Or a Non-Adversarial Approach to Sexual Harassment" (Cato Institute) that it is important to understand that men and women perceive things quite differently, and that non-legal strategies which she describes can be far more effective and less damaging than legal remedies.

Law professor Catherine Ross has just written an important book, "Lessons in Censorship: How Schools and Courts Subvert Students' First Amendment Rights" (to be discussed at a Cato book forum on March 16), in which she argues that "the failure of schools to respect civil liberties betrays their educational function and threatens democracy."

The popularity of the verbally crude Donald Trump might, in part, be a reaction to the political correctness of the political class and timid leaders of organizations who have failed to defend freedom of speech.

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